

interested in the Late Iron II through Hellenistic periods and for researchers desiring a guide for crafting excavation reports.

Andrews University

DAVID MERLING

Harvey, Anthony E. *Strenuous Commands: The Ethic of Jesus*. Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990. viii + 248 pp. \$17.95.

In this book, Harvey reopens the study of the sayings of Jesus after Bultmann's "brilliant analysis," which, even if unintentionally, seems to have rendered the teaching of Jesus irrelevant to Christian ethics. As a result, today "the church and the entire structure of Christian moral theology" (17) has proceeded to devise guidelines for Christian living based on natural law. Others who are outside "the church," like Gandhi, Tolstoy, and Bernard Shaw (16), have recognized a distinctive ethic of Jesus.

Harvey acknowledges that "in what situation, or with how much emphasis, elaboration or repetition Jesus would originally have spoken them [his sayings] we shall never know" (38). Still, he wishes to establish "within which framework of thought such teaching would have been given and what response would have been expected from its hearers" (20). Here he does with the ethical teachings of Jesus what he did with his ministry and passion in *Jesus and the Constraints of History* (see my review in *AUSS*, 22 [1984]: 269-271). His argument is that the moral teaching of Jesus finds its most logical context in the aphoristic sayings of the Wisdom Tradition, even if at times it shares with *Koheleth* an antiwisdom stance. It also shares with Cynic teachers the desire to give moral instruction to the masses, rather than limiting itself to the leisure class.

The author makes a good argument for a Wisdom framework of thought, thereby rejecting both the Pharisaic project of building a fence around the law and the Essene constitutionalizing of a sectarian "rule." It seems, in fact, that Harvey's main concern is to deny that the ethic of Jesus was intended, or should function, as a "community rule" (27). Thus, while admiring those Christians who through the centuries have taken the strenuous commands of Jesus seriously, because they function "as a judgement on those more liberal and world-affirming Christians who have settled for an 'ethic of intention,'" Harvey criticizes them for having converted Jesus' instructions into "rules" (202).

According to Harvey what is distinctive about Jesus is the way in which he placed the Wisdom moral tradition at the service of his gospel of the kingdom. Some elements which are central to the Wisdom tradition, like the importance of a good reputation, the value of moderation, and the significance of friendship (67), are absent from Jesus' teaching. But what

is most striking is that Jesus does not assume that the past is a good guide for the future (191). Harvey does admit, however, that what is distinctive is not much (200).

The kingdom of God, according to Harvey, "embodies values that most human beings regard as ultimately desirable," and therefore, it would seem, shares with Wisdom a basis in common sense. It is conceived as "within the range of possibilities" which common sense agrees to and desires. On this account, "it cannot be dismissed as totally visionary or impracticable" (208). This means that the strenuous commands issue "a challenge to live 'as if' the kingdom were already a reality" (210). If this is the case, one may wonder at the option Harvey offers as an alternative to Bultmann. Bultmann taught that every human question about what to do in the present (ethics) is answered by Jesus with a counter-question about the future (eschatology), which places the present in jeopardy because God in heaven is Savior and Judge. Harvey tells us that when human beings ask Jesus how to live he answers by appealing to common sense, only making the point that one must include in the equation that the kingdom is already a reality and as such destroys the grip of the past as a guide for conduct. Whether one prefers Harvey's option to Bultmann's will be determined, I am afraid, on the basis of theological preferences, and not because Harvey has taken the strenuous commands more seriously.

Still, it must be said that Harvey has done a commendable job in his exploration of the strenuous commands and has expanded the discussion of their historical context. In the process he has taken some of their roughness and domesticated them for easy access in "the church." He wants to make sure that sectarians do not become the sole claimants to this tradition.

Saint Mary's College
South Bend, IN 46556

HEROLD WEISS

Hill, Andrew E., and John H. Walton. *A Survey of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Corporation, 1991. 448 pp. \$22.95.

Although several surveys of the Old Testament have been published, *A Survey of the Old Testament* is a welcome addition to the literature on the Old Testament. The contents of this book are divided into six parts. The first part is the prologue, containing general articles on the Old Testament. Topics covered include a historical overview of Old Testament times, geography, and archaeology. The last part is the epilogue.

In between, the books of the Old Testament are discussed. Each survey takes up the following aspects: authorship, historical background,